

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 021225Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9925

INFO SECDEF

COMDT COAST GUARD

CNO

SECTransPORTATION

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 2864

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, TD, US

SUBJECT: NEGOTIATION OF EXTENDED RIGHTS FOR OMEGA
TRAINING

REF: STATE 263608 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ARE QUITE
PROPITIOUS FOR RAISING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO THE CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT FOR U.S.
GOVERNMENT RIGHTS TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE OMEGA STATION
TRINIDAD FOR THREE YEARS BEYOND THE EXPIRATION OF
THE 1961 WEST INDIES FEDERATION DEFENSE AREAS
AGREEMENT.

2. IN VIEW OF CONCLUSION IN REFTTEL THAT USG WILL NOT
SEEK TO MAKE OMEGA TRINIDAD A PERMANENT PART OF OMEGA
NETWORK, BUT ONLY WISHES TO RETAIN THIS STATION
UNTIL 1980, WE PROPOSE SEEKING A SIMPLE THREE-YEAR
AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF MAINTAINING
OUR NECESSARY FACILITIES FROM DECEMBER 31, 1977
UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 1980. SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD OF
COURSE ENVISAGE ACTUAL OPERATIONAL CLOSURE OF THE
STATION SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE OF THE AGREEMENT
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EXPIRATION TO PREPARE THE SITE FOR RELINGUISHMENT TO

THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

3. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT A SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT WILL POSE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IN NEGOTIATION AND WE MAY OBTAIN FOR MINIMAL QUID PRO QUO IN COMPARISON WITH WHAT WE WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR A MORE PERMANENT AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD EXTEND BEYOND TERM OF OFFICE OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE BECOME MORE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL ISSUE. FURTHERMORE, PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAGUARAMAS PENINSULA ARE NOT LIKELY TO IMPINGE ON THE OMEGA SITE BEFORE 1981. NEVERTHELESS, WE ANTICIPATE THAT SOME QUID PRO QUOS WILL BE DEMANDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, MOST LIKELY IN THE FORM OF SOME LAND RENT AND/OR COMMITMENT TO PRINCIPLE OF JOINT MANAGEMENT OF THE STATION AND TRAINING OF TRINIDADIAN PERSONNEL. LATTER DESIRE HAS BEEN EXPRESSED EARLIER BY PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS BUT MAY BE LESS RELEVANT TO A SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT THAN TO A MORE PERMANENT EXTENSION OF THE FACILITY.

4. RECOMMEND EMBASSY BE EMPOWERED TO PRESENT A NOTE TO THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS INCORPORATING OUR DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE A THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT FOR OMEGA, INCLUDING RATIONALE ALONG LINES OF PARAGRAPHS TWO THROUGH FOUR OF REFTEL. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH A NOTE SHOULD PROPOSE A MEETING AT WHICH THE MINISTRY AND THE EMBASSY COULD SUBSEQUENTLY EXPLORE THE SUBJECT, LEADING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO CONCLUSION OF A FINAL AGREEMENT. SEVERAL MEETINGS WOULD PRESUMABLY BE REQUIRED, WITH NEGOTIATING POSITIONS SUBMITTED AD REFERENDUM EACH TIME TO WASHINGTON. DECISION HERE COULD BE REACHED IN TWO TO SIX MONTHS IF WE REACH NO IMPASSE OVER CONDITIONS.

5. FOR A THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT, AND CONSIDERING THE MINIMAL NUMBER OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL INVOLVED, RECOMMEND AGREEMENT BE KEPT AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE. LONG, INVOLVED AGREEMENT COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF STATUS OF FORCES COULD CAUSE GOTT TO SHY AWAY AND HAVE DOUBTS. PERHAPS REFERENCES TO PRIVILEGES ACCORDED (FOR EXAMPLE) CONFIDENTIAL

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IN APPROPRIATE CLAUSES OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE VIENNA CONVENTION ON CONSULAR RELATIONS COULD SUFFICE WITHOUT WRITING IN DETAILED SOFA LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD GIVE UNDESIRABLE MILITARY CAST TO THE NEW AGREEMENT. IT MAY BE IMPORTANT TO ASSOCIATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE NEW OMEGA AGREEMENT FROM THE DEFENSE AREA AGREEMENT OR ANY HINT OF DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT, IF WE ARE

TO OBTAIN READY ACQUIESCENCE.

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